
Swedish Migration Agency Officers Loves Vacations

When you have lost all your expectations, you can only care about your life; I mean “breathing, eating and sleeping” without any feeling, like an animal.

I am a gay man from Turkey, the vacation paradise for most Europeans and tourists. I don't know if we can calculate an “average human lifetime”, but if it were 75 years, I already spent 1/3rd of it hiding myself and begging for respect and acceptance in this paradise. I gladly accept that, okay, my country is geographically heavenly, but nobody should forget this: a place could only be livable when you know and love everyone who lives there.

I am a young gay who is not able to feel young anymore. I wasted 25 years of my life for just acceptance of others. I heard this kind of advice a million times from Swedes: “why do you care what others think, it's your life...” But trying to get this acceptance is not for love, it's about surviving.

Discrimination gets in the way of pride in daily life, and I experienced every kind of it. I was never able to be who I am in public, in school, with my family. I tried to live in different cities in Turkey before coming to Sweden. It was not easy to say goodbye to everything I had. Every city in Turkey has different kinds of people, who mostly think the same about gays. Some of them assessed me as a sinner, some of them as a pervert, some of them as a shame, some of them as worthless, but it was the very rare person I ever met in my life who assessed me as a human.

“But then, I was moving less to win their love and more to avoid my family.”

Swedes have also asked me many times “why is it such a big deal for the families, it's none of their business”. Yes, in my paradise it is a big deal. “Disowning” and “discrimination” - these words sounded lovely to me, because at least they would have meant I wasn't going to get murdered.

The police are liable to protect everyone in the country; I experienced that their “everyone” does not include me. Once I went to a police station after being attacked by four people in Istanbul – which is a metropolis and which should be more accepting than other cities – because for a moment I walked hand in hand with a man. They laughed at me, “what did you expect, of course they will throw bottles at you; you didn't expect them to throw flowers did you?” ... Did I?

Another time I spoke to police on a street in Istanbul in the early morning hours. They stopped me without any reason and one of them started to humiliate and bully me, saying the usual things. I was scared, but then I suddenly also was furious and I answered him “yes I am gay, I am a faggot, why – do you want to test what I am for yourself?”; I was up against a car the moment after that under the policeman's hands. After these two lovely meetings with policemen, trusting the police is over for me.

At the Swedish migration board they asked if the Turkish courts can protect me. This is a country where a 13 year old girl, N.Ç., was raped by 26 different men, most older than her father. She had to have four surgeries because of it. The judge told her, "oh my daughter, why did you seduce these men?" He didn't punish these men for rape. The court only sentenced them for having (consensual!) sex with a girl under the age of 15. It's still kind of a nightmare for me. I can't imagine the girl's nightmares.

But think about it for a moment: if they can't see that a 13-year-old girl is innocent and needs protection, how do you think they view an adult man like me, having sex with men?

I was studying to be a teacher, but it became impossible because of gossip spreading. Nobody saw me with a man, but gossip is enough to ruin you and put your life at risk. A career would now be impossible because according to them, nobody wants to work with a "bad role model, perverse, abject teacher".

I will never be able to demand my family's protection and love; their traditions and their religion are both on me. I am a dirt stain on their family tree, the family's blood; the only way to clean this blood is by killing me. They can survive without me but they can't survive without their priceless honour.

I tried to change these people, but their minds didn't allow me; it goes too deep. I wasted 25 years just hiding reality. I need a little bit freedom, I need hold a man's hand while I am walking, I need a measure of respect.

Now, tell me: how can I call this country a paradise, as lovely European vacationers did? Don't speak about life in Turkey based on what travel guides say.

Anil Absolution